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Disarmament Commission
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New York

Chairman: Ms. Quarless ..... (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Ms. Du Buisson (South Africa): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Madam, on your assumption of the chair of the 2000 Disarmament Commission. I also wish to welcome back the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the two Working Groups, as well as the other members of the Bureau. Please be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

At the Commission's 2000 session, my delegation expressed concern over the inability of the multilateral disarmament forums and the international community to substantively address some of the most central issues of our day, reflecting a deepening crisis in international relations, non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. To this end, we remain concerned over the continued inability of the Conference on Disarmament to start its work and the fact that most First Committee resolutions do not enjoy the support of all Member States and that the work of this Commission is often ignored. We, however, believe that the positive conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the conclusion of the Preparatory Committee's preparation for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects; and the progress made towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will serve as inspiration to delegations to actively engage in the work of this Commission.

The South African delegation is hopeful that our deliberations at this session on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons will be focused, so as to allow the timely conclusion of the Commission's deliberations on these two agenda items at this session. In this regard, my delegation wishes to thank the respective Chairpersons for their working papers, which we consider a good basis for our work during this session. Only through focused consideration of these two agenda items will the Commission remain a relevant deliberative body. To this end, I wish to assure the Commission of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Nuclear disarmament is considered by all States to be one of the most important disarmament issues facing the international community. Moreover, nuclear disarmament is a concern of the entire international community. South Africa, however, remains concerned over the continuing refusal by many States to recognize that this is indeed the case. The lack of agreement on a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament is indicative of the lack of commitment to achieve progress in this field.

South Africa, like many other non-nuclear-weapon States, expected that the positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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(NPT) — at which the nuclear-weapon States made an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons — would have set in motion practical ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament. We remain hopeful that the undertakings given by the nuclear-weapon States will be honoured, undertakings to further reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally, to increase transparency with regard to their nuclear-weapon capabilities, to further reduce non-strategic weapons and to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies, and that all five nuclear-weapon States would engage in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

These undertakings — as well as the agreements on the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament and on the negotiation within five years of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices — would provide much-needed momentum for progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. In addition, a lot remains to be done to ensure a nuclear-weapon-free world. In this regard, concrete agreed measures to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems, such as de-alerting and removal of nuclear warheads from their delivery systems, are urgently required.

My delegation wishes to reiterate South Africa's firm position that the Commission's deliberations on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament should build upon, but in no way diminish, the undertakings given and agreements reached on a substantive agenda for nuclear disarmament at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. I wish to emphasize that South Africa will not lend its support to any effort that will undermine the success achieved at that Conference. Furthermore, our deliberations should support the process in the Conference on Disarmament, and we should consider other tangible ways and means to positively address the core elements required to facilitate action and results in moving our disarmament agenda forward.

Although nuclear weapons constitute the greatest threat to the survival of mankind, the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons has a negative impact on confidence among States, especially among neighbouring nations. The build-up of conventional weapons beyond a level that can be considered legitimate for the purposes of self-defence creates an unstable environment, in particular in areas where regional instability leads to regional conflicts. It is a commonly known fact that conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, are the source of most of the death and suffering in conflicts around the world today. The rebuilding and prosperity of society that are gained from various peace and democratization initiatives are curtailed by the accompanying proliferation of these weapons. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the non-paper prepared by the Chairperson of Working Group II.

One of the factors underpinning practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons is the need for transparency. My delegation circulated a working paper at the Commission's 1998 session with regard to South African policy on transparency in armaments. South Africa continues to believe that the scope of the current United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is too narrow, as it does not include smaller types of weapons such as small arms and light weapons, which have become the weapons of choice to destabilize countries in many regions of the world. We remain convinced that an expanded Register, or a similar reporting system on other categories of weapons such as small arms, light weapons, explosives and non-lethal military equipment, either as part of the current Register or in the form of separate regional and/or global registers, would enhance confidence among States.

South Africa also considers the destruction of surplus, confiscated or collected weapons no longer used by government forces as an important, practical and tangible measure to promote confidence among States in the field on conventional arms. It is for this reason that my Government decided to destroy all surplus small arms rather than to sell them. The latest destruction phase took place during January this year, at which another 102 tons of small arms, parts of small arms and spares were destroyed. In addition to this destruction, hundreds of tons of conventional weapons and ammunition have been destroyed in cooperation with the Government of Mozambique during different phases of "Operation Rachel". The destruction of these weapons forms part of my Government's commitment to regional efforts in southern Africa to create a peaceful and stable environment in support of much-

needed socio-economic development and poverty eradication.

I wish to recall that at our previous session my delegation circulated a working paper in which we emphasized the value of the destruction of surplus and collected weapons as a practical confidence-building measure. In considering practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, the Commission should take due cognizance of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. My delegation wishes to reiterate South Africa's strong support for the draft programme of action prepared by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. Our deliberations at this session should therefore be in support of the draft programme of action, and should not unnecessarily complicate progress in this regard.

In conclusion, my delegation remains committed to working in the Commission and in all other disarmament and non-proliferation forums to achieve the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and to limit the numbers of conventional weapons to the minimum required for self-defence. My delegation stands ready to work with you, Madam Chairman, and with the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, in pursuit of the goals set out for the Commission in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which called for every effort to be made, insofar as possible, to adopt decisions on substantive issues by consensus.

Mr. Ko (Myanmar): At the outset, the Myanmar delegation would like to extend its warm congratulations to you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the 2001 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We firmly believe that under your leadership we will reach a fruitful conclusion to our deliberations. I would also like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation towards the successful conclusion of this session. I would further like to extend my appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his comprehensive statement at the beginning of this session.

We are now entering the second consecutive year of discussion on the items entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", and there is a need to focus more on bridging the gap among delegations in producing concrete results from our deliberations.

We had all placed high hopes on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament after the successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The statement by the five nuclear-weapon States during the 2000 NPT Review Conference reaffirming their willingness to engage in systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally was a positive contribution to the outcome of the Review Conference. The nuclear-weapon States should abide by their commitment and should follow through with actual implementation. In striving towards nuclear disarmament, ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by all nuclear-weapon States is a requirement, while at the same time, strict observance of the terms of bilateral and multilateral disarmament machinery is a prerequisite.

We believe that the START II treaty should be implemented and that negotiations on a START III treaty should be initiated urgently. We are also concerned about possible tests of missile technology, which could lead us to a new arms race. My delegation expresses hope for the early establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament to discuss nuclear disarmament and for the re-establishment of the ad hoc committee on a fissile materials ban to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be one of the fundamental issues in nuclear disarmament. That is why we welcome any progress achieved in the Conference on Disarmament to establish a mechanism to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons by accidental or intentional triggering.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones also constitutes an effective measure in preventing geographical proliferation of nuclear weapons, thus contributing towards nuclear disarmament. Myanmar is accordingly supportive of all efforts to establish nuclear-free zones. In that connection, more than 100 countries have signed and ratified their respective regions' treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The Myanmar delegation believes that confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms should be built upon systematic and steady approaches. Without hampering the right to national self-defence or the right of self-determination of States, we should cooperate with each other. We also believe that this should be based on the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for the mutual interests of nations.

Myanmar has been actively participating in the work of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in a constructive and productive way since it became a member. We attended the first ASEAN Regional Forum meeting on confidence-building measures held at Seoul from 30 October to 3 November 2000. We believe that such meetings at the regional level enhance confidence-building in the specific region and in other regions as well. The Association of South-East Asian Nations and the European Union met at Vientiane on 11 and 12 December 2000 for the thirteenth ASEAN-EU ministerial meeting, under the co-chairmanship of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and France, acting as President of the Council of the European Union. Among other things set out in the Vientiane Declaration, confidence-building measures were explicitly mentioned, as follows:

> "We agreed to enhance our cooperation in regional security more generally, notably through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which we recognized as an important forum for dialogue on peace and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. We underlined the importance of the confidence-building measures which have been undertaken as the primary focus in the strengthening of the ARF process, and encouraged further efforts to intensify the confidence-building measures as well as to finalize the concept and the principles of preventive diplomacy. The European Union indicated its readiness to share its experience with ASEAN in those fields."

I would like to conclude, Madam Chairperson, by reiterating our commitment to closely working with you towards a fruitful outcome of our deliberations.

Mr. Sood (India): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Madam, on your election as the Chairperson of the Disarmament Commission at its 2001 substantive session. We assure you of our full cooperation in the discharge of your tasks. We would also like to place on record our appreciation for the efforts that have been made by the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups.

India's unwavering commitment to global nuclear disarmament and to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time was stated unambiguously in this very forum last year. I will therefore not belabour those points again. I would like instead to focus on the ways and means that have evolved from my country's principled position, which should help our collective efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

When we met last year, perhaps there was a feeling among some participants that the Disarmament Commission needed only to echo and take note of certain tantalizing promises made in the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), without necessarily engaging in substantive discussions here in this room. Developments since then, during the past year, have belied that euphoria. Instead of seeing a reinforcement of the disarmament agenda in bilateral or multilateral settings, we saw the reality of unfulfilled promises, missed opportunities, the search for unilateral advantages, the hardening of confrontational postures, threats to unravel instruments that form the basis of global security, and a Conference on Disarmament that is kept in suspended animation. An unjust and discriminatory framework has proved once again that it is fundamentally flawed and is incapable of providing a fair and equitable system that respects the legitimacy of equal and undiminished security for all. This realization will hopefully infuse a greater degree of sobriety and seriousness into our deliberations this year.

Let us in the Disarmament Commission, which is the deliberative leg of the triad of disarmament machinery having a more universal representation than most other disarmament forums, set down the principles and measures that will pave the way to agreed, multilateral, non-discriminatory and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

First, we should recognize and respect the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 1996, which holds that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". (*A/51/218, annex, para. 105 (2) F*)

It is necessary to translate this *obiter dictum* of the International Court of Justice into a politically binding decision and eventually a legal convention. It is in this context that India seeks a convention on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Second, we must also seek a review of nuclear doctrines that claim the unacceptable posture of first use; pursue a global no-first-use agreement that includes legally-binding assurances of non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States and recognizes nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region. India has already made unilateral commitments in this regard and would exhort other nuclear weapon States to do so in the interim, while the international community works towards converting these into legal obligations.

Third, we must implement the resolve expressed at the Millennium Summit to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. There is no justification for maintaining thousands of weapons on hair-trigger alert. All nuclear-weapon States need to commit themselves to reducing the risk of unauthorized, as well as accidental or unintentional, use of nuclear weapons.

Fourth, we must insist on the irreversibility of nuclear reductions by honouring bilateral commitments on tactical and strategic nuclear weapons. This should be complemented by reductions in a multilateral framework.

Fifth, we must discourage unilateral action that may be perceived as being inconsistent with existing treaties or which threaten the principles of legitimate security for all.

Sixth, we must prevent the weaponization of outer space, rather than having to resort to arms control or disarmament measures later.

Seventh, we must enable the Conference on Disarmament to commence work in ad hoc committees established with appropriate mandates relating to nuclear disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, outer space and negative security assurances.

We are ready to engage in substantive discussions relating to each of these points, as they merit fuller consideration.

Let me focus now on conventional disarmament. As for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, we have made it clear that we must avoid duplication of work undertaken elsewhere, while taking into account the guidelines on certain aspects already agreed and adopted by consensus in the Disarmament Commission itself. We hope to achieve greater progress on this subject than was possible during the last year. We have participated actively in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, scheduled for later this year. We are hopeful that a successful Conference will contribute to the creation of substantial confidence-building measures by addressing the problem of illicit transfers and its close nexus with cross-border terrorism, drug-trafficking and organized crime.

India has ratified all the Protocols of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), including amended Protocol II, dealing with landmines, and Protocol IV, on blinding laser weapons. The universalization of the CCW process through signature and ratification of its Protocols by more States would constitute a significant confidence-building measure in the area of conventional weapons. The CCW Review Conference at the end of this year will provide an opportunity for peer review of the process and adherence to it.

India has consistently attempted to rely on confidence-building measures with countries in our neighbourhood in the interest of maintaining international peace and security. India has been the initiator of many confidence-building measures and will continue to pursue these actively. The price that has to be paid for confidence-building measure initiatives could sometimes be excessive and could threaten to unravel the best of intentions. We therefore hope that discussions in our Working Group will produce substantial results soon in the form of practical and useful guidelines.

My delegation seeks to actively participate in the deliberations in the days ahead, with the hope that we

will be able to achieve significant results at this session.

Mr. Bebars (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to extend to you, Madam Chairperson, our sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission for this year. I wish to express our full confidence in your ability to steer the deliberations of the session. I also wish to thank and express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Javad Zarif, for his wise leadership of the proceedings of the previous substantive session. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Egypt attaches special importance to the meetings of the Disarmament Commission, one aspect of the disarmament machinery that elaborates guidelines that will contribute to disarmament efforts and non-proliferation. The work of the Commission this year assumes special importance, given that this is the second session dealing with the special framework for guidelines on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, as well as practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Hence, negotiations have started this year on the elaboration of guidelines that could be adopted next year, taking into consideration the different views of States presented at the 2000 session.

First I will touch on the topic of nuclear disarmament, which is the main priority of disarmament efforts, as expressed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That priority will continue to govern our work until we achieve the full elimination of nuclear weapons. Despite the fact that the title of the item on nuclear disarmament that we are discussing in the framework of the work of the Commission is so general, we are hopeful that this topic will be dealt with in the same spirit that prevailed in the course of the Sixth Review Conference on the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

That spirit led to the adoption of a Final Document that contained comprehensive obligations on the part of the nuclear-weapon States with regard to achieving nuclear disarmament, in addition to emphasizing the specific nature of the situation in the Middle East. Nuclear armaments and other weapons of mass destruction pose a threat to humanity. Logic therefore dictates that international efforts should be intensified so as to pave the way for developing the necessary mechanisms to completely eliminate that danger — an international framework that should be commensurate with the scope of the threat.

We therefore believe that the Conference on Disarmament must be activated, as it is the only negotiating mechanism on disarmament matters. The Disarmament Commission should also adopt clear-cut guidelines aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It should also work to achieve the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the implementation by the five nuclear-weapon States of their obligations under article VI of the Treaty.

Special regional efforts for nuclear disarmament constitute fundamental endeavours that complement international efforts for nuclear disarmament. These efforts are designed to fully eliminate nuclear weapons and free the world from their dangers. The States of our region, the Middle East, have committed themselves to achieving that lofty goal by acceding to the NPT. That represents a clear-cut renunciation of the nuclear option and a declaration of our intention to free our region from nuclear weapons. It also embodies our States' commitment to moving these efforts from the regional to the universal level, with a view to freeing the world from nuclear weapons. Israel alone has impeded the efforts of the region by continuing to stand by its nuclear option and refusing to accede to the NPT and subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Sixth NPT Review Conference was therefore compelled to express in its consensus Final Document the need for Israel to accede to the Treaty and to subject all of its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the Agency, with a view to achieving the aim of full accession to the Treaty in the Middle East.

This was again reaffirmed by an overwhelming majority of 157 votes when the special resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, resolution 55/36, was adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth regular session. That resolution contained a new operative paragraph — paragraph 2 — which

"*Reaffirms* the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East".

Egypt accords particular importance to the need to achieve the goals and respect the principles of nuclear non-proliferation in the Middle East and throughout the world. It also understands that the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is a pressing issue that must be dealt with expeditiously. In this connection, we would like to highlight the efforts being made and the initiatives being taken by Egypt with a view to eliminating weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Efforts made since 1974 include the introduction by Egypt of draft resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which have been adopted by the General Assembly by consensus since 1980. In addition, every year the General Assembly has adopted, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution aimed at ending nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. That resolution was further developed during the course of the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly.

Parallel with these efforts, in April 1990 President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak undertook a special initiative aimed at freeing the Middle East region from all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems so as to eliminate the dangers of such weapons. This was a natural extension of Egypt's initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In this connection, Egypt welcomed the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to hold an international conference to consider ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. The General Assembly endorsed that proposal in adopting resolution 54/282.

In 1998, in support of the Secretary-General's proposal, Egypt took the initiative to hold an international conference to consider ways of freeing the world from nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame. In the context of Egyptian efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, and with a view to setting out fundamental prerequisites in this connection, the States of a new coalition — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden — have introduced for the past three years draft resolutions to the General Assembly entitled "Towards a nuclear-free world: the need for a new agenda", which have been adopted and reflect the philosophy of the coalition States. In these resolutions, the General Assembly has emphasized the clear obligation of the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate all nuclear weapons and to take practical measures to accelerate the achievement of the universality of the NPT.

Confidence-building measures are one of the main issues to which we accord special importance. Despite the fact that the Disarmament Commission has considered the matter of conventional weapons, we are nonetheless of the view that there are many developments that should be reconsidered in the hope of arriving at agreed guidelines on this issue. Among the matters to be reconsidered in this connection is the extent to which the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has been successful as a means of confidence-building during recent years. In this regard, Egypt regrets the failure of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, during the course of 2000, to expand the scope of the Register so that it would cover military holdings and procurement through national production. We also regret the inability to include weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. This runs counter to the operative part of resolution 46/36 L, on the establishment of the Register.

This failure clarifies and highlights the stagnation that has enmired the work of the Register and its current invalid form as an effective means to build confidence and provide early warning. The Register's scope must be expanded to cover all categories of weapons without selective criteria, especially given that the experience of past years has made it clear that the Register — which contains only seven categories of conventional weapons — will not attract international participation. Many countries do not consider the Register, with its limited scope, sufficient to meet their security needs. Its success in the future will therefore depend on the international community's desire to achieve further confidence-building and greater transparency.

Mr. Sano (Japan): At the outset, let me congratulate you most warmly, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 2001 session of the Disarmament Commission. Our greetings are also

extended to the other members of the Bureau. I sincerely hope that, through our deliberations, we will build upon what was achieved at last year's session. I can assure you that you will have my delegation's full support and cooperation towards a successful outcome of this session.

Allow me to state my delegation's views on the two topics of this year's session. I will begin with ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament.

About a year ago here in New York, the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed by consensus on a Final Document, which contained the practical steps to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It was a remarkable achievement – all the more so if we consider the adverse international security environment which the international community was facing at that time. It clearly demonstrates that all the States parties to the NPT are seriously committed to the realization of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The agreement on the practical steps contained in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference is our common yardstick for measuring progress in nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of nuclear weapons can be achieved only through the implementation of such concrete steps. Taking into account the agreement reached at the NPT Review Conference, Japan, together with Australia, introduced a new draft resolution, entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", at last year's Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, which reaffirmed the Final Document and showed a path to be taken towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons. It was adopted with the support of 155 Member States.

Let me point out some of the concrete and immediate steps which this resolution enumerates as a matter of priority. First, with regard to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the resolution has set 2003 as the target year for its entry into force. Those remaining 13 States whose ratification is required for its entry into force are urged to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

Japan, for its part, has been tirelessly promoting ratification of the CTBT among the countries concerned through such measures as sending high-level missions to discuss the issue. We have also been working hard in Vienna with other States as the coordinator for the second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, which will be held here at United Nations Headquarters this coming September. Since the first Conference in October 1999, 24 countries, including five whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force, have deposited their instruments of ratification, while six have signed it, making a total of 75 ratifiers out of 160 signatories, including 31 whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force. We attach great importance to the success of the coming Conference. The entire international community should utilize this opportunity to give life to this historic instrument.

Secondly, the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices as soon as possible. Japan would like to see the completion of the negotiations by 2005, as called for in the General Assembly resolution sponsored by Australia and Japan. In this regard, it is truly regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament remains at an impasse due to the lack of an agreement on the programme of work. This year should be a year of progress. We cannot allow the credibility of the Conference to erode any further.

Japan would like to make every effort to maintain the political momentum that was encouraged by the NPT Review Conference. Together with interested countries, Japan is currently planning to make concrete contributions to support the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off (FMCT) treaty, following the excellent meeting on the verification of FMCT hosted by Germany and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva last month.

Thirdly, the reduction of United States and Russian strategic offensive arms is also of critical importance. The Japan-Australia resolution also recognizes that the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons will require further steps by the nuclear-weapon States, including the continuation of the nuclear disarmament process beyond START III and deeper reductions by all nuclear-weapon States, unilaterally or through negotiations.

Regrettably, the process is now at a standstill and the problem of strategic stability is impeding the immediate restart of the process. Prolonged dispute on this issue will lead to a continued lack of progress in arms control and disarmament. We strongly hope that

the nuclear-weapon States find a solution rather quickly through intensified dialogue.

Let me now turn to the issue of practical confidence-building measures in conventional arms. When we discuss confidence-building measures in conventional arms, we cannot forget the significance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as one of the few globally implemented measures. Since we submitted the resolution for the establishment of this mechanism in 1991, together with the European Union at that time, we have taken great interest in the evolution of this system. We have hosted several workshops with experts in Tokyo and have also promoted wider participation in the Register through bilateral contacts. We are glad that, as of last year, 92 countries had reported to the Register. However, the number of participating countries is far from satisfactory. We would like to reiterate the importance of wider participation in such a mechanism.

In the Asia-Pacific region, confidence-building measures have begun to play a more significant role than before through increased bilateral contacts and through various forums. One important achievement in the region is the establishment of the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF). In recent years, the ARF has implemented confidence-building measures, such as publishing the annual security outlook, submitting defence policy papers and encouraging countries to report to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Moreover, candid and frank discussions have taken place at high-level meetings on some sensitive security issues. The emergence of a tradition of such frank exchanges of views in this region is an indispensable process for achieving confidence-building measures among such nations. At the last session, we presented a working paper which features such topics regarding the ARF.

From the beginning of this year until now, we have witnessed several meaningful regional events related to confidence-building measures. One example is the ARF confidence-building measures seminar on conventional weapons transfers, which was hosted by the Royal Government of Cambodia and co-sponsored by Canada and Japan at Phnom Penh last February. Another example is the Korea-Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) conference on confidence-building measures, held at Seoul last month and hosted jointly by the Republic of Korea and the OSCE. These events have given us a good opportunity to reiterate the importance of confidence-building measures in the region.

The issue of small arms and light weapons is also linked to practical confidence-building measures in conventional arms. In the Preparatory Committee for the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, a draft programme of action was discussed and some confidence-building measures were proposed. Our delegation hopes that the discussions taking place in the Disarmament Commission will enrich the preparatory process for the Small Arms Conference. We also hope that a successful outcome of the Conference will contribute to our continued discussions next year. In this regard, Japan would like to make a fresh commitment to work hard to ensure a successful outcome of the Conference this coming July.

Lastly, we would like to express our appreciation to Ms. Gabriela Martinic, Chairperson of Working Group II, for providing us with her non-paper in advance. Our delegation considers this a good head start for further discussion. My delegation looks forward to participating in lively discussions over the coming days.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, Madam, let me congratulate you on behalf of the Chinese delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at the current session. I am convinced that, with your wisdom and diplomatic experience, you will lead this session to a successful conclusion. The Chinese delegation will cooperate fully with you, the Bureau and other delegations. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Javad Zarif, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, for the contribution he made as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at the last session.

Mankind has entered the twenty-first century. At present, the international situation on the whole is moving towards relaxation. Peace, cooperation and development are the common aspiration of the international community and this quest is the general trend of the times. Nonetheless, there are still a number of hidden dangers in the international security arena. The cold-war mentality, hegemonism and power politics die hard. An inclination to achieve absolute security by gaining a military edge has been on the rise. Due to territorial disputes, ethnic clashes and religious differences, some countries suffer from

political turmoil and social unrest, and some regions are plagued with rampant conflicts.

At the beginning of the new millennium, countries are taking a keener interest in lasting peace and the common development of mankind, and desire new concepts and fresh ways of promoting international security that reflect the trend of the times. In today's world, security is mutual and indivisible. No country exists in complete isolation from the international community, nor can any country completely address all its security concerns completely on its own. While seeking its own security, a country must consider whether the measures it takes help increase the common security of all countries. True security for one country can be realized only when it is built on the basis of universal security and extensive international cooperation. Military superiority never guarantees security. Unilateralism at the expense of other countries' security leads only to greater insecurity.

China therefore advocates the establishment of a new security concept centred on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, cooperation and the settlement of disputes through dialogue. We in China believe that seeking absolute security for oneself through strengthened military alliances and an intensified arms race does not go along with the trend of the times and will never lead to genuine security. Only when mutual trust is enhanced through consultation and dialogue on an equal footing in pursuit of common security can peace and stability be genuinely maintained.

China has always attached great importance to the Disarmament Commission and has supported its continued efforts to promote international peace, arms control and disarmament. The Chinese delegation maintains that the positive role of the Disarmament Commission in formulating guidelines for global arms control is irreplaceable. In the current situation, this forum needs to be strengthened. We will continue contributing to the success of the Commission with a constructive attitude.

Nuclear disarmament is an important agenda item in the Disarmament Commission. The Chinese delegation believes that international nuclear disarmament efforts are at a crossroads, and prospects are disturbing. So far, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has still not reached agreement on a programme of work. This has left the multilateral nuclear disarmament process in stalemate for several years. START II has yet to be implemented, and negotiations on START III seem a far-off objective. Thus, the Russia-United States bilateral nuclear disarmament process is at a standstill.

It must be pointed out that the crux of that matter lies in the attempt by a certain country, aiming at absolute security, to press ahead with a national missile defence system covering the whole of its territory and to introduce weapons into outer space on the basis of its superior economic, scientific and technological capabilities. The Chinese delegation believes that this will greatly shake the foundation of nuclear disarmament and poison the security environment in such a way that nuclear disarmament cannot proceed. Thus, it will have grave consequences.

First, this is in essence a disguised form of unilateral nuclear-arms expansion that will severely hinder the international arms control and disarmament process and may even trigger a new round of the arms race. A relatively stable balance of power among major countries, and a global strategic balance based thereon, are the prerequisites for progress in the international arms control and disarmament process. The country concerned, which possesses a cutting-edge nuclear arsenal and the most sophisticated conventional weapons in the world, pursues a policy of nuclear deterrence based on first-use of nuclear weapons. Thus, a national missile defence will become an offensive arms multiplier for that country. This will not only severely impede the United States-Russia, and even the global, nuclear disarmament process; it will also render meaningless any initiative to reduce offensive nuclear arms.

Secondly, this will severely disrupt stability and the global strategic balance and undermine mutual trust and cooperation among major countries. To develop and deploy a national missile defence system, one has to clear the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Admittedly, the ABM Treaty was a product of the cold war. However, like all the other arms control treaties, it reflects the interdependent nature of the security relationship between the parties. Such interdependence did not disappear with end of the cold war; rather, it has become even deeper in the era of globalization.

Thirdly, it will seriously undermine the international non-proliferation regime and related efforts. We must not lose sight of the fact that the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of missiles is a very complex global issue which can be tackled only through global cooperation. A national missile defence system will not help in that respect. On the contrary, it will disturb the basis of the international non-proliferation regime and will provoke further proliferation of missiles, thus complicating the situation.

Fourthly, it will give rise to the ascendancy of the military factor in international relations, to the detriment of international peace and security. Once a solid shield is at hand, regardless of its effectiveness, the country concerned will be more prone to act unilaterally and to use or threaten to use force in international affairs. That will consequently create more instability in the world.

Fifthly, the introduction into Asia and the Pacific of a theatre missile defence system as a part of a national missile defence will do no good for peace and security in the region. Recently, concerted efforts by countries concerned have paid off, with some regional hot spots gradually cooling down, the regional situation relaxing, and, in particular, the peace process on the Korean peninsula experiencing a historic breakthrough. Contrary to such developments, a theatre missile defence system in that region can only be a new complicating and confrontational factor.

On questions of disarmament, China has all along advocated the following points. Countries with the biggest nuclear arsenals should reduce their respective nuclear arsenals irreversibly and on a large scale. The nuclear-weapon States should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstance, should unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, and should negotiate to conclude an international treaty on this. Nuclear-weapon States should withdraw their nuclear weapons deployed abroad to within their own territory and should give up the policy and practice of nuclear sharing and the nuclear umbrella.

We welcome the reduction by the United States and Russia of their respective nuclear weapons through either bilateral agreement or unilateral action. However, it must be pointed out that the reduction of excessive, "overkill" nuclear weapons for one reason or another and their transfer into so-called inactive reserves that are under constant maintenance are only a rationalization of the structure of those nuclear forces. They are by no means nuclear disarmament in its real sense. Such acts have to be rectified.

China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, thus making a unique contribution to the international cause of nuclear disarmament. As a nuclear-weapon State, China has never evaded its responsibilities and obligations on the question of nuclear disarmament. China has exercised utmost restraint in the development of nuclear weapons. Among the five nuclear-weapon States, China has the smallest nuclear arsenal, but it is the first to have undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. China has a small but effective nuclear force; China's sole and ultimate objective here is self-defence.

China took an active part in the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and was among the first to sign it. The Treaty has been submitted to the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, for deliberation. China supports the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will, in accordance with the provisions of the final document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), agree at an early date on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work on the three main subjects of nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and a fissile material cut-off treaty, with a view to launching negotiations on such a treaty.

China understands the positive aspirations of a vast number of non-nuclear-weapon States for nuclear transparency, because we believe that the implementation of certain transparency measures, as an organic part of efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, is necessary. But it has to be made clear that huge differences exist among nuclear-weapon States in their nuclear strategy, nuclear forces and security environment. And in that connection, countries must be allowed to take different transparency measures at different stages, bearing in mind that strategic balance and stability must be maintained and that the security of countries must remain undiminished.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that a strengthened and consolidated international non-proliferation regime is an effective way to prevent

nuclear proliferation and promote nuclear disarmament. Therefore, we call upon the relevant countries to sign the CTBT or accede to the NPT as soon as possible.

China believes that the establishment of practical and workable confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms is of positive significance for maintaining international peace and stability, relaxing regional tension and promoting sound development of the cause of disarmament and arms control. In that connection, we support and attach importance to the establishment and implementation of practical and workable confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

In recent years, China has been working for the furtherance of good-neighbourliness and friendship with neighbouring countries. China, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, within the Shanghai 5 framework and through consultation and cooperation on an equal footing, have signed an Agreement on confidence-building in the military field in the border areas and an Agreement on the reduction of military forces in the border areas. This sets an example for the international community in exploring new security approaches. We have always supported dialogue and cooperation in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and have actively participated in and successfully hosted projects relating to confidence-building measures. China has also signed with India an Agreement on confidence-building measures in the military field along the line of actual control in the India-China border areas and the Agreement on Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas.

The Chinese delegation welcomes confidence-building measures and steps that in recent years have been taken by other regions and countries in the field of conventional arms. We believe that these are conducive to enhancing mutual understanding and trust and to establishing sound and stable State-to-State relations, thus contributing to world peace and stability. Meanwhile, we also hold the view that the establishment of confidence-building measures must take into account regional differences, actual conditions and other specific factors. While it is necessary to draw appropriately upon the experience of others, it is even more important to adhere to the principles of ensuring that confidence-building measures are consistent with current conditions in the area and of seeking common ground while setting differences aside. It is not proper for countries to blindly copy the confidence-building measures of other regions or countries; nor is it good for some to attempt to point fingers or to impose confidence-building measures on others.

In an effort to establish practical and workable confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, the Chinese delegation would like to work together with other members of the international community and to put forward the following propositions.

First, countries, military Powers and, in particular, military groups should strictly adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter and should accordingly cease to interfere in other countries' internal affairs by wilful use or threat of use of force. This, we believe, would create the necessary international security environment for the establishment of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Secondly, the improvement of the international security environment, the maintenance of the international strategic balance and stability and guarantees of undiminished security for all should be the prerequisites and the basis for all confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Thirdly, it must be fully realized that the field of conventional arms is closely related to other disarmament areas. Any plot or attempt that may lead to the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space will certainly have grave repercussions, endangering all efforts to establish confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Fourthly, a new security concept centred on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation must be advocated. The principles of sovereignty and voluntarism must be upheld and a policy of gradual progress from the easier to the more difficult items has to be pursued. Only in that way can we lay a solid foundation for the establishment of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons throughout the world.

Fifthly, any attempt at military expansion and strengthening of military alliances in the guise of establishing confidence-building measures must be opposed. Any move that disregards universally

recognized facts and undermines other countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity, under the pretext of military trade, must also be rejected.

Maintaining world peace and regional stability serves best the fundamental and long-term interests of the 1.2 billion Chinese people. China's biggest task in this century is to focus on economic development and on continuously improving the livelihoods of its people. To that end, China will unswervingly pursue an independent foreign policy of peace, will further its sound and cooperative relations with other countries in the world, will strive for a long-term peaceful international environment and a good general environment and will work for lasting peace and common security for all countries in the world.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Please allow me to begin by congratulating you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the current session of the Disarmament Commission. I believe that your able leadership will lead to successful deliberations on all the agenda items before us.

Ensuring durable peace on our planet is a long-cherished desire of all humankind and is fundamental for establishing just international relations. Countries and peoples desiring peace, and standing in opposition to war, have set nuclear disarmament as a major task in order to attain permanent world peace and have made strenuous efforts to realize comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

In particular, the commitment made by heads of State and Government during the Millennium Summit held last year to complete the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, was a significant step in encouraging global disarmament endeavours.

Non-nuclear-weapon States demand that nuclear-weapon States provide assurances not to use nuclear weapons against them, set forth a timetable for the elimination of all nuclear weapons and put it into practice at the earliest possible date.

Nevertheless, in the new century the issue of nuclear disarmament brings more serious challenges than ever before.

The new United States Administration is moving to opt for a policy of dominating the world with nuclear weapons, disregarding the demand of the times.

The United States, stressing the absolute role of nuclear weapons, is attempting, through all ways and means, to establish the national missile defence system, which is strongly denounced and rejected by the international community.

This attempt on the part of the United States creates the great danger not only that global disarmament and peace efforts will be rendered futile in their entirety, but also that a new nuclear arms race will be sparked. As long as such hegemonic power politics of the United States continue unabated, the nuclear disarmament so desired by humankind will never be realized. Therefore, we hold that hegemonic power politics, a major obstacle to the disarmament process at present, should never be tolerated.

After the historic Pyongyang summit and the announcement of the 15 June North-South Joint Declaration last year, aspirations for reconciliation, unity and reunification have been mounting in an unprecedented manner on the Korean peninsula. This is also welcomed and encouraged by the absolute majority of United Nations Member States.

However, we are witnessing moves to reverse these positive developments, and these moves are increasingly undisguised. The hard-line policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a case in point.

What is noteworthy in this regard is that the new United States Administration is unjustifiably picking on us in order to find pretexts for establishing the national missile defence system.

In order to enforce the national missile defence system, the United States continues to brand the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a rogue State, citing the non-existent missile threat from us. This is a brazen sophism, reversing black and white.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea made it clear to the Clinton Administration that it was willing to agree upon negotiated solutions to the missile issue in the interests of both sides. Our position at that time was as follows.

First, we have been working towards a satellite launch entirely for peaceful purposes, and if the United States guaranteed that it would launch our satellite free of charge, we would not launch a satellite by ourselves.

Secondly, we have been exporting missiles purely for commercial purposes, and hence we would stop missile exports as soon as due compensation in kind was guaranteed.

Thirdly, if the United States gave up its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we would discontinue the development of all missiles of more than a certain range.

Our position was officially clarified and discussed during the visit of the former United States Secretary of State, Mrs. Albright, to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and it was to be finally agreed upon at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States summit. This shows our sincere attitude and will as they are.

However, for other reasons the United States President at that time did not visit Pyongyang, and the present United States Administration refuses to proceed in this process.

In the light of the United States Administration's stance on enforcing the establishment of the national missile defence system, it is crystal clear why it is evading the resolution of a missile issue with us. This clearly shows who is the rogue in the true sense of the word.

No further remarks are necessary to explain that the real intention of the United States in pursuing the national missile defence system lies elsewhere. Therefore, whether the United States establishes the national missile defence system or not, it has nothing to do with us.

But as long as the United States continues picking on us in invoking the plea for the national missile defence system, we will have no choice but to take countermeasures.

Since the United States attempts to enforce the establishment of the national missile defence system by groundlessly accusing us and defying international opposition, our countermeasures also will not be bound by anything.

Our countermeasures will have no limit in their scope and depth, and we have the necessary potentiality, capacity and will. Even if this entails an arms race between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and if all other agreements are scrapped, we will have little to lose.

We will make all efforts for peace in Korea, Asia and the rest of the world in the future, too, but we will never tolerate any attempt to impose peace in a unilateral and unjust way.

Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea): First of all, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to extend my warm congratulations to you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its current session. We are confident that, under your able leadership, this session will be fruitful. We would also like to convey, through you, our gratitude to the outgoing Chairman for his untiring efforts for the success of the Commission's work. Our thanks also go to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his inspiring introductory statement.

The Disarmament Commission has played an important role as a deliberative body in the field of disarmament. Over the years, this Commission has elaborated guidelines for common ground on many issues. This year, we resume our deliberation on two agenda items: ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. My delegation looks forward to making progress in formulating guidelines on these two issues.

Let me now touch upon the ways and means of achieving nuclear disarmament. The issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has for decades remained high on the disarmament agenda in various multilateral forums, as nuclear weapons continue to be a source of concern to the international community. Over the past few years, we have witnessed both gains and setbacks in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

One of the most significant events was the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Its outcome represents the renewed collective commitment of the 187 States parties to the Treaty, which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The comprehensive Final Document, adopted by consensus, squarely addressed important issues, such as nuclear disarmament, Treaty compliance and universality and the strengthened review process.

Most importantly, the nuclear-weapon States agreed unequivocally to the total elimination of their

nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, with a number of practical steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of article VI of the Treaty. The future task will be to translate this undertaking into action.

The work of the Disarmament Commission should build upon the outcome of the NPT Review Conference and complement efforts in other disarmament forums to move forward with nuclear disarmament. We are all well aware that nuclear disarmament is a highly political issue. This was evident from the voting patterns on all relevant General Assembly resolutions on which consensus failed to be reached and from the adoption of conflicting resolutions. In the light of the complexity and delicacy of the nuclear disarmament process, my delegation believes that a practical, step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament is very necessary.

Furthermore, my delegation believes that the nuclear-weapon States can make further efforts to reduce their nuclear weapons, including through the START process, and to increase transparency. We also support the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In this context, we welcome the high-level Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, to be held in New York this September. My delegation is also of the opinion that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty should commence without further delay, and without conditions.

Regarding the paper of the Chairman of Working Group I, we are of the view that it could have outlined in a more focused way the important changes that have taken place in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Such an overview would enable us to draw out meaningful elements for the conclusions and recommendations section of the paper.

Let me now turn to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. The primary goal of confidence-building measures is to reduce the risk of armed conflict among States by diminishing mistrust, misunderstanding and miscalculation. Confidence-building measures, especially when applied in a comprehensive manner, have the potential to significantly enhance peace and stability, and to eventually lead to or facilitate disarmament.

The Disarmament Commission has been making substantial contributions to building global norms in the field of conventional weapons. Despite its nature as a deliberative body, it has adopted several guidelines: guidelines on conventional arms control, in 1999; guidelines for international arms transfers, in 1996; and guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security, in 1993. My delegation has been supportive of these guidelines, as they establish agreed ground rules for confidence-building in the field of conventional arms.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms represents an important first step towards transparency in conventional arms, and we therefore support the continuation of this endeavour and encourage more member States to participate in the scheme with sincerity.

Confidence-building measures should encompass a plurality of approaches, and should include both military and non-military dimensions. The non-paper of the Chairman of Working Group II can serve as a good basis for further deliberation. The uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons sows the seeds of new conflicts and exacerbates ongoing ones, seriously undermining confidence-building efforts among neighbouring countries. In this regard, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the draft programme of action on small arms and light weapons encompasses some elements encouraging participating States to enhance transparency by exchanging information relating to marking systems and export-import data.

Now I would like to draw the attention of the Disarmament Commission to recent developments in our region, Asia.

I am very happy to report that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Republic of Korea co-hosted a conference on the applicability of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures in North-East Asia, which was held in Seoul two weeks ago. This conference explored the possibility of applying OSCE's experience to North-East Asia. Its objective was to enhance understanding of multilateral security cooperation in the OSCE region, as well as to focus on perspectives for information- and experience-sharing between OSCE and Asia, notably in the fields of confidence-building

measures and confidence- and security-building measures within the framework of cooperative and comprehensive security.

The holding of the first joint OSCE-Korea conference was a valuable opportunity, at this time of change in the security environment of North-East Asia, to enhance common awareness of the necessity of addressing security challenges through regional security cooperation. Even if the OSCE model may not be perfectly applied to the promotion of confidence-building in all parts of the world, it will no doubt serve as a useful reference point from which many valuable lessons can be learned. I am sure that the outcome we achieved through the OSCE-Republic of Korea conference on confidence- and security-building measures will provide valuable lessons for the future confidence-building process on the Korean peninsula as well.

The Disarmament Commission has taken up some very important issues on the international disarmament agenda. Indeed, the two issues before us today carry great significance for global peace and security. I would like to reaffirm that my delegation will play a constructive role throughout our deliberations. We will give our full cooperation and support to the Commission in the hope that it can make useful contributions to the promotion of peace and security by devising practical confidence-building measures for a new era.

Mr. Guani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at this session and we wish you every success.

The Millennium Declaration was a timely call to work for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. At present, it is fashionable to speak of a "strategic understanding" as a way of justifying a necessary balance. This understanding, rather than being aimed at the goal of this Commission to find ways and means to achieve an effective reduction of weapons, is a covert acceptance of the diversion to the military sector of resources that should be earmarked for economic and social cooperation, thereby depriving those sectors of resources to fund social programmes urgently needed in the developing world and, indeed, in the developed countries.

With the passage of time, it has become ever more obvious that the structures maintained by the persistence of a mentality which paralyses all innovative action in this sphere have become obsolete. The reduction and elimination of weapons of mass destruction cannot be conditioned by factors alien to the general interest of society, particularly those that promote short-term national interests to the detriment of the interests of people living below the acceptable minimum level of well-being.

It is inconceivable that the most destructive weapons ever created should still be on alert 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The nuclear era should finally be laid to rest. We cannot perpetuate such a threat in this century. Non-nuclear-weapon States — the majority of the international community — cannot allow this situation to drag on indefinitely and irresponsibly.

The problem of disarmament is manifest at various levels. Small and light weapons are monopolizing a great deal of effort in the negotiations to eliminate illicit trafficking, which have reached a critical phase. We all entertain the hope of a successful Conference in July in New York, the major elements of which were outlined a few days ago at the third session of the Preparatory Committee. In these negotiations, however, and in others on disarmament, we still await the emergence of a true commitment that all major military Powers should be willing to undertake.

In the meantime, we in the Common Market of the South have already adopted concrete measures and take pride in having declared our countries to be within a zone of peace. With this, we offer a concrete example of a position contrary to any attitude expressing a culture of violence. It is with the establishment of confidence-building measures adapted to regional realities that less ambitious but very significant goals can be attained.

My delegation is concerned by the ongoing lack of agreement on how to initiate such measures. Models that may succeed in some regions do not always respond to the needs and realities of others. Such regional approaches should not hinder the establishment of a multilateral, comprehensive system of confidence-building measures, which is one of the tangible contributions that could be made at this session of the Conference. In this respect, we congratulate the Chairperson of Working Group II,

Mrs. Martinic of Argentina, for her efforts to draft a text of possible recommendations and for her serious and constructive work to draft a text for adoption next year.

I should point out that much has been done in Latin America on the establishment of confidence-building measures. In the inventory of such measures undertaken by the competent regional bodies, Uruguay has implemented 230.

Uruguay cannot but express its concern at the maritime shipment of radioactive wastes through the South Atlantic and the South Pacific. In a joint communiqué of 21 December 2000, the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay reiterated their concern to the Governments of France, Japan and the United Kingdom about these shipments along the Cape Horn route, given the vulnerability of our ecosystems and the threat such shipments pose to them. This call was reiterated recently in Santiago at the twentieth meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Rio Group.

We need to continue working in the context of the competent international organs to strengthen the security norms in the transportation of radioactive materials. These efforts should take into consideration the non-pollution of the marine environment, the exchange of information on chosen routes, the communication of emergency plans in case of accident, the commitment to recover radioactive materials in case of shipwreck and the importance of having effective accountability mechanisms in force.

Ms. Ibraimova (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, allow me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you warmly, Madam, on your election and to express the hope that, under your guidance, we will have a constructive and fruitful session of the Commission.

The outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the upcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; and the agenda of the Disarmament Commission at its current session allow us to look to the future of optimism.

With regard to the problem of nuclear disarmament, we wish to emphasize questions linked to the creation and strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In that context, one of the important areas in which work is being done in Kyrgyzstan has to do with the process of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. An important role in the successful implementation of that initiative is being played by the Consultative Meeting of Experts of the Central Asian Countries, whose meetings are held regularly under the auspices of the United Nations. Those meetings include the Bishkek meeting held in 1998, which largely helped to define the form and content of a future agreement on a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala and the entire Department for Disarmament Affairs for the tremendous assistance they are lending us. We are convinced that the creation of such a zone will be one of the most realistic ways of supporting peace and security in the region, and that it will be an effective means of achieving nuclear disarmament once and for all. This is the position of Kyrgyzstan, and has been since the beginning of work on an agreement.

Turning to the question of effective disarmament policy, we must examine and take into account the environmental costs linked to the problems of storing nuclear waste. This is a very sensitive issue for many countries, given its political danger and serious environmental consequences for the population. We call for the cooperation of all States and international organizations that can provide technology and experts in the field to clean up and dispose of radioactive substances.

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of the question of confidence-building measures and conventional weapons. We would like to point out the increased threats to Central Asia stemming from international terrorism and the illegal trafficking in drugs and weapons. These negative phenomena are a threat to the global trend towards strengthening peace and progress. They also undermine fragile new democracies and, on the whole, are a threat to our general efforts to build a more secure and safer world.

Kyrgyzstan is convinced that regional efforts to build confidence can contribute to the establishment of confidence-building measures as a whole. The Treaty on Collective Security within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the work with the Shanghai Five are not only a marvellous example of regional cooperation in the field of security, but also an illustration of the ability to complement existing disarmament mechanisms at the global level.

In this connection, we wish to point out the initiative taken in Kyrgyzstan to hold a dialogue between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The basic goal of that dialogue is to work out long-term joint measures to confront security challenges faced by OSCE and OIC member States, to strengthen mutual understanding and trust between States and to support a dialogue and mutual assistance between civilizations.

In our view, the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on Small Arms has illustrated the growing understanding of the fact that the illicit trafficking in, and stockpiling of, small weapons is a serious threat to the population. There is every reason to think that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will be an important step forward towards establishing a global consensus and will give impetus to the work of the Disarmament Commission.

We would like to point out the important role of the United Nations in multilateral negotiations and in nuclear and conventional disarmament. The work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is an integral component of international stability and security. Kyrgyzstan's position on this issue remains unchanged.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the delegation of Viet Nam, to convey to you, Madam, our warmest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of this important body. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. I am fully convinced that, under your able guidance, our work will achieve a successful outcome. I would like to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Javad Zarif, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for his valuable contributions to the work of the Commission at its last session. The delegation of Viet Nam is also very grateful for the devoted efforts of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, and those of his team.

Viet Nam recognizes the important role of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative organ holding regular and in-depth discussions on disarmament and security issues. The work of the Commission facilitates the negotiations on disarmament instruments. The two items on the agenda of the Commission this year are of great relevance to the reality of our world today, and, as this is our second year of discussion of these two items, the outcome will have an important bearing on our work as a whole. At this meeting, my delegation wishes to offer a few comments on the two items on the agenda, with a view to facilitating the common work of the Commission in the two Working Groups.

First and foremost, with regard to ways and means to promote nuclear disarmament, my delegation wishes to underscore its strong support for the call made by the heads of State and Government in the United Nations Millennium Declaration for the convening of an international conference to identify measures to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Without any prejudice to our strong support for the convening of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament to deal with the issue of disarmament in all its aspects, Viet Nam firmly believes that an international conference on weapons of mass destruction is timely and can be a good vehicle towards agreed measures to free our world from all nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction.

Viet Nam has always consistently supported international and regional efforts to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We fully share the view, stated in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, that in the field of disarmament and arms control, priority must be given to nuclear disarmament. In this context, the continued retention of a huge number of nuclear warheads and efforts to produce even greater numbers of such lethal weapons or to enhance their destructive capacities are unjustifiable on any grounds. It is a matter of urgency for the world community, and for the United Nations in particular, to make greater and more concerted efforts to promote the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems by negotiating and concluding an international convention to ban all such weapons.

It is of great significance to us to reaffirm the conclusion of the International Court of Justice, delivered in July 1996, that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Likewise, the Commission should welcome the positive outcome and the Final Document of the last Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to the undertaking of eliminating all their nuclear arsenals in particular. Although nuclear disarmament efforts have had their ups and downs in the past, we nevertheless strongly believe that concerted efforts should be made to have the nuclear-weapons States fulfil this commitment without any further delay.

Bearing in mind the complexities and obstacles in the way of total nuclear disarmament, our delegation supports the nuclear disarmament proposals put forth by the New Agenda Coalition. We share the view that such interim measures should be taken to pave the way towards our goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Amongst these initiatives, we believe that the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty and measures to de-alert and deactivate nuclear weapons are the most urgent items on the nuclear disarmament agenda.

In that context, we wish to stress that Viet Nam shares the grave concern of the world community over the possible negative impact of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of deployment in outer space, which could contribute to further erosion of an international environment favouring the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security. Viet Nam welcomes the commitment made by States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the last NPT Review Conference to strengthen and preserve the integrity of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), and therefore urges that the States parties to that Treaty strictly abide by its provisions. My delegation will deal with the item entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" in greater detail when we speak in Working Group I on behalf of the countries members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), to introduce a working paper jointly produced by that group.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to touch upon the item entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", which is another of the substantive items on the agenda of the Commission this year. Viet Nam supports the initiation of practical confidence-building measures as a way to facilitate reductions in conventional arms and the prevention of conventional arms build-ups, thus making a tangible contribution to the strengthening of peace and stability in the world and in individual regions. We congratulate the Chairperson of Working Group II on the production of a non-paper on this item. In our humble opinion, the non-paper creates a good framework for discussion and negotiation of truly comprehensive guidelines on practical and effective confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Confidence-building measures are surely not substitutes for disarmament measures but, if carefully nurtured and strictly observed, they will facilitate and promote the process of arms limitation and disarmament. It is our view that, in order for confidence-building measures to be effective, they must be created on the basis of agreement by all Member States. As a matter of principle, confidence-building measures, as a prerequisite for their enhancing confidence among States, must uphold the fundamental principles of international law, in particular those enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

We fully share the view that, in order to be successful, all confidence-building measures, both global and regional, should be applied on a voluntary and reciprocal basis and should be incremental in nature. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, for instance, has been a significant success, in the sense that the major importers and exporters of the seven types of conventional weapons have supported it in a consistent manner. Viet Nam has regularly provided the required information to the Register because it believes that the Register is a good global confidence-building measure, which enhances confidence among Members of the United Nations in this field. Viet Nam strongly holds that efforts should be taken to encourage wider participation in this important mechanism before any expansion is considered.

As far as regional confidence-building measures are concerned, our delegation is of the view that they should take into full account the specific conditions and needs of the regions concerned. Successful confidence-building measures from one region can be a good reference for other regions but they cannot be

applied in an automatic way in disregard of the concerns and security environments of specific regions.

As a member of ASEAN, and currently holding the chairmanship of the Standing Committee of that group as well as the chairmanship of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Viet Nam strongly supports the efforts of countries of the region to formulate practical confidence-building measures in all areas. We support the step-by-step approach being promoted in the Regional Forum in this field as the best way to enhance peace and stability in the region. Viet Nam also welcomes the contributions made by the major players in the Forum and by international organizations, the United Nations in particular, to seminars on security and disarmament issues under the auspices of those organizations.

In conclusion, I wish to underline our sincere hope that the Commission will make a great deal of headway on the two important substantive items on its agenda at this very important session so that our work next year will be accomplished and so that guidelines will be sent to the General Assembly for consideration and adoption.

Mr. Onishchenko (Ukraine): At the outset, Madam, let me, on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, extend our warmest congratulations to you on your election as Chairperson of the Disarmament Commission at its current session. We are confident that your skilful guidance and the interested participation of all delegations will make this session productive and meaningful. We wish also to thank your predecessor, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, Mr. Javad Zarif.

The Disarmament Commission has played an important role as a deliberative forum in the United Nations disarmament machinery and has forged a consensus approach to many significant and sensitive issues. At the present stage, we should explore all possibilities to demonstrate the Commission's effectiveness in dealing with such outstanding problems as ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Ukraine's contribution to disarmament is widely recognized. Since the last session of the Disarmament Commission, some important events have taken place in Ukraine in the field of arms control and disarmament. In particular, the agreement on adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), signed at New York in 1997, have been ratified. Recently, the last inspection in the framework of the Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF Treaty) was conducted on Ukraine's territory, thus closing one of the important chapters in my country's disarmament story.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Ukraine is among the strongest and most consistent supporters of the efforts aimed at achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world, although we realize that the way to that goal cannot be easy and straightforward. To reach that goal, we need the good will of nuclear-weapon States and patience, perseverance and pressure from all countries, their civil societies and their citizens. We are convinced that further deep reductions in nuclear weapons are of crucial importance now to confirm the validity of the results achieved by the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which were unanimously praised last summer in this body.

Among the other main tasks to which we feel we have to draw specific attention during this session of the Disarmament Commission, I would highlight the following: resuming the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty and establishing a subsidiary body for substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues; the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); and the future of the START process in relation to the viability of the ABM Treaty.

We also believe that the multilateral discussion of nuclear disarmament could encompass such topics as reasons for possessing existing numbers of nuclear weapons, an overview of today's deterrence concepts, the role to be played by tactical nuclear-weapon, transparency of nuclear weapons inventories and measures to promote the irreversibility of weapons reduction.

We acknowledge with satisfaction that the Chairperson's paper has already assembled a rich set of relevant information, and the Disarmament Commission will hopefully be in a position to elaborate conclusions and recommendations during this session

and the next. We also welcome the efforts of the Chairpersons of the Working Groups.

It is a well-known fact that expenditures for the acquisition of conventional armaments amount to almost 80 per cent of the global military budget. Therefore, conventional arms control is equally important to ensure lasting international and regional peace and security. In this context, one should mention the Stockholm Document and Vienna Document regimes, which constitute comprehensive confidence-building measures and promote cooperation in military matters in the area of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). These documents form the basis of confidence-building measures on conventional arms in Europe. To meet the new challenges associated with the widespread proliferation of illicit traffic in and easy access to small arms and light weapons, last year the OSCE adopted its Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Ukraine supports this Document, and now our Government is considering ways and procedures to implement its provisions effectively and in the fullest manner possible.

At the same time, we realize that a comprehensive solution to small arms and light weapons-related problems is impossible without serious consideration of the political, military, social and economic situations in countries concerned, and that their legitimate defence and security needs should be taken into account as well. For its part, Ukraine is exercising a consistent and responsible policy with regard to the supply of military goods to the international market. We respect and are in full compliance with existing moratoriums on arms supplies to certain regions and countries of the world.

The surplus weapon destruction undertaken in some countries deserves our full appreciation and approval, although it seems necessary to elaborate criteria for the applicability of the term "surplus". Technical and financial assistance for the collection, withdrawal from illegal circulation and elimination of small arms and light weapons is critically important in many cases. The successful outcome of the 2001 United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects corresponds to the vital interests of all nations, while confidence-building measures should constitute a critical element in its final product.

Ukraine remains interested in working in the Disarmament Commission and other arms control and disarmament forums to achieve the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and to limit the number of conventional weapons to the minimum levels required for self-defence, and we hope that this session will give further momentum to the ongoing international efforts in these directions.

The Chairman: We have concluded our list of speakers for this morning. We will resume this afternoon to hear the remaining 13 speakers in the general exchange of views.

I extend the appreciation of the Chair to those delegations that responded to the appeal for prompt attendance at this morning's meeting. I look forward to a more enthusiastic response this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.